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LETTER DATED 11 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward to you the enclosed self-explanatory press release issued on 11 December 1998 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea.

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the text of the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Haile MENKERIOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex

Press release issued on 11 December 1998 by the Ministry
of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea

Ethiopia's predictable sabre-rattling on the eve of peace talks

As efforts intensify to find a peaceful settlement to the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Addis Ababa regime is once again beating the war drums and issuing threats to use force. Ethiopia's Foreign Minister said this week that "if the conflict is not resolved peacefully soon, it will not be long before the government and leadership of Shabia [Eritrean People's Liberation Front] are buried in the holes that they themselves have dug". Ethiopia's President has also vowed that "Ethiopia shall emerge victorious in the struggle against Eritrea".

Taking their cue from the authorities, the Ethiopian mass media have intensified their war propaganda.

This latest campaign fits into a pattern often reverted to by Ethiopia in the past months of creating a war scare on the eve of all peace initiatives. The purported aim is to put pressure on the third parties working to bring about peace so that they may placate Ethiopia for not restarting the war. It is no coincidence that Ethiopia's latest bellicose statements come as the Organization of African Unity prepares to consider the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict next week in Burkina Faso.

Eritrea rejects Ethiopia's attempts to create obstacles for peace initiatives through the threat of imminent war. It reaffirms its commitment to find a peaceful solution to the conflict, realizing full well that neither side can impose a solution through war. Eritrea further believes that an immediate cessation of hostilities is vital for creating a conducive climate for peace. Ethiopia, on the other hand, has rebuffed all attempts to broker a ceasefire.
